



TEACHINGS OF THE SIDHA

PART 3: CONDUCT

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Cover

Painting of Saint Ramalingam

Agathiyan Production House Publication 2010

Radiance only unfolds in the heart of the devotee through his devotion, and even differs—according to the intensity of the devotion.

Nature does not make any leaps; neither does yoga.

- 'The Hatha Yoga Pradipika of Svatmarama', Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation and commentary, The Aquarian Press 1992

PROLOGUE

Just as a seed carries a tree in it and a child evolves into a man tomorrow, we are already divine in nature. We only need to drop the veils that prevent us from realizing who we actually are.

In Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation of the 'HATHA YOGA PRADIPAKA OF SVATMARAMA', The Aquarian Press 1992, is written,

'Since there is a path to liberation, there also must exist the means to pursue it to the end. And all the means that we require to reach our ultimate goal, however high it may be, lie within us. The problem is only how to release them.'

Those who have seen god within themselves are called gurus. The gurus who had walked the same path that we are walking today, had seen the truth and had revealed it to their disciples and also made the knowledge and know-how available through their writings.

These great men are the sidhas. And they had many disciples to their credit. They have wrote and documented extensively on their findings. But unfortunately much is lost or remains hidden to the present generation.

Ramalinga Adigal the last of the sidhas to appear only 187 years ago in 1823 talks about there being seven veils and demonstrates them in the Sathya Gnana Sabai that he built in Vadalore.

Tavayogi Thangarasan Adigal demonstrates this concept too through the seven tier granite structure that he has installed in the Sri Agathiyar Gnana Peedham Thirukovil in Kallaru, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu.

After dropping or overcoming these seven veils of spiritual ignorance or avidya one reaches the summit or peak symbolically represented by light as in Vadalore and Kallaru.

How did the sidhas reach the truth? How did they manage to see the light? Which path did they take?

So where do we start on this path?

We start right now and right here where we stand. We start bringing change to ourselves. Just as when one brings light into a room the darkness disappears, we bring good attributes unto ourselves and the negativities die away on their own.

In the foreword to Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation and commentary on the 'HATHA YOGA PRADIPAKA OF SVATMARAMA', The Aquarian Press 1992, B. K. S. Iyengar comments,

'The moment the consciousness, the ego, the intelligence and the mind are quietened, the Self, which is the king of these, surfaces and reflects on its own. This is samadhi.'

'It is not that God has revealed himself to him (man), but that he has learned to cognize the Divine. A small but essential difference. The emotional value (light) of the Divine remains the same, but the devotee is now in a position to experience it directly.'

THE FIRST LESSON

Towards this purpose the sidhas have written extensively on good morals and attributes. Thiruvalluvar gave us the Thirukural. Avaiyar gave us the Athi Chudi and Konrai Venthan. Patanjali gave us the Yoga Sutras. Svatmarama gave us the Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

The very first lesson that they teach us is to bring change in our behavior, speech and beliefs. The sidhas emphasize on character building, good behavior, right conduct, right knowledge, and yogic practices. They ask us to restrain our anger, lust and ego. Once we take care of these weaknesses, then perception and understanding will change accordingly. The world will still be the same but we shall see it in a different perspective then. We shall accept everything as God's doing. We shall go with the flow. We shall see the world differently. Moving further on there comes a stage where nothing is understood, instead everything is known.

From 'THE YOGA OF EVERLASTING LIFE' by Leonard Orr, the author observes the common denominators of the practices of all the immortals he had met (eight of them),

'Notice the main points are not intellectually stimulating. They are practices. They are not something you can learn. They are something which you do. They are like the water which runs forever, the fire which is always consuming. The wind which always moves. The Earth, always changing and nourishing. The immortal yogis who do these simple practices are always awake and alive. The basic practices described here naturally evolve the soul to this high state of body mastery.'

Thiruvalluvar in the Thirukural, reminds us of the following:

- Be righteous,
- Be kind in speech
- Be grateful
- Maintain self-control,
- Do not desire another man's wife,
- Be forgiving,
- Do not envy,
- Do not covet,
- Do not slander,
- Perform charity,
- Be truthful,
- Abstain from anger,
- Be courteous,

Avaiyar in her work entitled 'Athi Chudi' has 109 advises for us, amongst them:

- Do good,
- Control anger,

Do not hinder aid to others,
Feed the hungry,
Help the needy,
Keep reading,
Do not be jealous of other's achievement,
Help your relatives and friends grow with you,
Look after your parents,
Do not forget those who have come to your aid,
Do not secure what does not belong to you,
Do not venture into things that are degrading by nature,
Abstain from using harsh language,
Afrain from thinking degrading thoughts,
Do not harm others,
Give your best in every venture that you undertake,
Lead an honest life,
Respect others,

Similarly Avaiyar in 'Konrai Venthan', has 91 advises for us. Through 'Muthurai', she has 30 advices and another 40 in 'Nalvazhi'.

B.K.S. Iyengar in his book 'LIGHT ON THE YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI', HarperCollins Publishers, 2005 writes as follows:

'Patanjali's 196 aphorisms or sutras cover all aspects of life, beginning with a prescribed code of conduct and ending with man's vision of his true self. Patanjali teaches the sadhaka to cultivate friendliness and compassion, to delight in the happiness of others and to remain indifferent to vice and virtue so that he may maintain poise and tranquility. He advises the sadhaka to follow the ethical disciplines of yama and niyama, the ten precepts which govern behavior and practice and form the foundation of spiritual evolution.'

The yamas are:

'Intending no harm in word, thought or deed; being sincere, honest and faithful; being careful not to misappropriate another's wealth; being chaste and not coveting the possessions of others or accepting gifts.'

The niyamas are:

'Purity of thought and deed, contentment, tapas, study of the self, surrender to god.'

Iyengar also adds that for one who lacks ethical discipline and perfect physical health, there can be no spiritual illumination.

'By practice and renunciation in the eight yogic disciplines which cover purification of the body, senses and mind, an intense discipline whereby the seeds are incinerated, impurities vanish, and the seeker reaches a state of serenity in which he merges with the seer.'

Again in the foreword to Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation and commentary on the 'HATHA YOGA PRADIPAKA OF SVATMARAMA', The Aquarian Press 1992, B. K. S. Iyengar writes,

'The Hatha Yoga Pradipika is divided into four parts. The first explains yamas (restraints on behavior), niyamas (observances), asanas (posture) and food. The second describes pranayama (control or restraint of energy), and the shatkarmas (internal cleansing practices). The third deals with mudras (seals), bandhas (locks), the nadis (channels of energy through which prana flows) and the kundalini power. The fourth expounds pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation), and samadhi (absorption').

'He does speak of non-violence, truthfulness, non-covetousness, continence, forbearance, fortitude, compassion, straightforwardness, moderation in food and cleanliness as yama, and zeal in yoga, contentment, faith, charity, worship of God, study of spiritual scriptures, modesty, discriminative power of mind, prayers and rituals as niyama. (The ethical disciplines of what to do and what not to do are given in the text. Asanas, pranayamas, bandhas, mudras and shotkarmas are illustrated by examples to assist aspirants with their practice. Dharana, dhyana and samadhi cannot be explained, but only experienced, when the earlier stages have been mastered.)'

'When the nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, endocrine and genito-excretory systems are cleansed through asanas, prana moves unobstructed to the remotest cells and feed them with a copious supply of energy. Thus rejuvenated and revitalized the body—the instrument of the Self—moves towards the goal of Self-realization.'

We refer further to Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation and commentary of the 'HATHA YOGA PRADIPAKA OF SVATMARAMA', The Aquarian Press 1992,

'Not to cause suffering to any living being; to speak the truth; not to take what belongs to others; to practice continence; to develop compassion and fortitude; to be merciful to all and honest; to be moderate in eating and pure in heart. These are the first prerequisites of yoga [the yamas]. Self-limitation [tapas, austerities], cheerfulness, religious faith, charity, contemplation, listening to sacred scriptures, modesty, a clean mind, recitation of mantras [japa], and observance of rules, these are the second requirements of yoga [the niyamas]. Thus equipped one can venture to take the first step into the wonderland of one's own self.'

'Good deeds, kind words, noble thoughts, a pleasing personality, interest in lofty pursuits are the distinguishing marks of sattva.'

Ramalinga Adigal mentions several acts of ignorance that he might have committed that had him take birth again and again.

"Did I create fear in others?
Did I hurt my loved ones?
Did I summon and tarnish others,
Did I stop others from making donations?
Did I smear my friends?
Did I sabotage friendships?
Did I speak gossip that lead to families being destroyed,
Did I refused to help one in need,
Did I increase taxes and rob others,
Did I make the poor suffer?

Did I act unjustly?
Did I stop the means of income of others?
Did I entice others and cheat them,
Did I rip work but refused to pay accordingly,
Did I adulterate rice with pebbles?
Did I ignore the hungry?
Did I refrain from feeding the poor?
Did I exposed those that had taken refuge with me,
Did I aid those who committed murder?
Did I scout and spy on behalf of thieves,
Did I snatch properties belonging to others and lied to them?
Did I sleep with those who had lost their virginity?
Did I abuse virgins who I had a responsibility to protect?
Did I rape those who already had had a husband?
Did I lock up birds in their cages?
Did I not feed the calves?
Did I build up this body by consuming meat?
Did I poison drinking water?
Did I fell trees that gave us shade?
Did I destroy others out of revenge?
Did I demolish public halls?
Did I not listen to my parents?
Did I not greet my guru?
Did I not give my guru his dues, for his sustenance?
Did I envy the learned?
Did I find mistakes in the writings of the wise?
Did I offend devotees of Siva?
Did I offend the yogis?
Did I prevent the public from conducting their prayers by shutting the doors to the temples?
Did I smear the name of the Lord?
What sin did I do, I do not know", questions the saint.

Ramalinga Adigal defines seven veils of spiritual ignorance as lust (kamam), anger (krodham), greed (lobham), infatuation (moham), pride (ynadha) and malice (matsaryam).

Agathiyar in my nadi readings has mentioned the importance of overcoming these adverse feelings in order to rise to the level of a sidha. These are the very basic requirements that one has to have in order to transcend further to the state of compassion that is required for a sidha. Ramalinga Adigal and Sidhartha were very compassionate towards other beings. This feature in them leads them on towards attaining the Effulgence and Nirvana respectively.

EPILOGUE

In Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation and commentary of the 'HATHA YOGA PRADIPNIKA OF SVATMARAMA', The Aquarian Press 1992,

'....the real goal of a yogi is to become a siddha. A siddha, a person in possession of siddhis, has developed powers that can readily be called supernatural. There are eight siddhis, the highest of which is nirvana, the great liberation. The siddhis are signposts on his way to the final goal, liberation'

Since habits become character over a period of time, it is of utmost important that we monitor our thought, speech and actions. This is where awareness comes into play, constantly keeping vigil never to let down the reins even for a moment. Let us help each other. Let us compliment us other. Let us fill in the shortfalls of the other. Let us live for each other. Stop ridiculing the weaknesses of others but instead compliment and assists in areas where the other is lacking.

We end this article with yet another beautiful message from Hans-Ulrich Rieker's translation and commentary on the 'HATHA YOGA PRADIPNIKA OF SVATMARAMA', The Aquarian Press 1992,

'Harmony is the key word, the all-important. There is no objection to the search for success as long as the harmony of life is not disturbed. No need to relinquish any of our plans and principles as long as there is harmony.'

'The state of enlightenment, the state that precedes sainthood, is positively the greatest and most desirable goal of all.

One still is a human being, but no longer a victim of nature;

Natural laws still prevail, but impose no burdens;

One still has needs, but is not dependent on them;

One feels and acts, but one does not act due to feelings.

The aim is always to be in tune with cosmic harmony rather than to give satisfaction to the ego. The Truth of absolute harmony which includes the creatures and the Creator: that is the sign of enlightenment, absolute humanness.

But the saint of the last stage is beyond everything human. He is a single sound that does not blend into a harmony of any kind, for he already occupies a higher plane of existence, one through which the enlightened one passes only at the time of death, or rather after death, when his individuality is dissolved.

A man who begins to outgrow worldly conditions will be reborn into the level of existence he has reached. The saint of the highest stage passes through this condition in his inner consciousness before his earthly death, because he has succeeded in freeing himself from everything that binds others to the world. Again and again I had the impression, and saw it confirmed from many sides, that the enlightened one represents the most perfect human being, while the saint on the highest level could in many respects no longer be measured by human standards: obvious omniscience paired with the symptoms of insanity, but nevertheless with the distinguishing signs of a genius. Phenomenal manifestations such as complete renunciation of sleep and food; suspension of all natural functions such as growth of hair on the head, perspiration, elimination; complete absence of signs of age, combined with the proverbial siddhis, the miraculous powers which nobody has a right to doubt. Even today one may be fortunate enough to meet siddhas in South India in whom all these phenomena are united. These few are living proof that saints of the highest level are not legendary figures.'